

Atlanta Youth Academy Wellness Policy

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Atlanta Youth Academy Wellness Policy

Preamble

Atlanta Youth Academy (AYA) is committed to the optimal development of every student. AYA believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14}

This policy outlines AYA's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students at AYA have access to healthy foods before, during and after the school day—through reimbursable school meals and snacks—in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active during and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- AYA's garden, science curriculum, PE curriculum, activities that involve physical activity and the chef are all coordinated.
- AYA establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students and staff at AYA.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

AYA has convened a representative wellness committee (hereto referred to as the AYA Wellness Committee) that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this school-wide wellness policy (therefore referred to as "wellness policy").

ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHIER GENERATION MODEL WELLNESS POLICY

The AYA Wellness membership will represent the whole school and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: students; representatives of the school nutrition program (ex., school nutrition director); physical education teachers; health education teachers; health care professionals (ex., health education teachers, vice principal, and the Development staff for funding needs). To the extent possible, the AYA Wellness will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Dean or designee(s) will convene the AYA Wellness and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school’s compliance with the policy.

The name(s), title(s), and contact information (email address is sufficient) of this/these individual(s) is:

Name	Title	Email address
Peter Rooney	President	peterr@atlantayouthacademt.com
Curtis Brown	Dean of the Academy	Curtisb@atlantayouthacademy.com
Bryant Daniel	Chef	
Billie Snieder	Science Teacher	billies@atlantayouthacademy.com
Terri Price	P.E. Teacher	terrip@atlantayouthacademy.com
Laura Snyder	Gardener	
Erin Conrad	Development Director	erinc@atlantayouthacademy.com
Anne Torrey McCuean	Grant Writer	annetorreym@atlantayouthacademy.com
	Student Representative	
	Faculty Representative	

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

AYA will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines specific to each school, and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by

how much, where, and when, as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. We will use the [Healthy Schools Program online tools](#) to complete a school assessment based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Index.

The plan will be reviewed twice a year by the administration.

Recordkeeping

AYA will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at the Business Office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including (1) Efforts to actively solicit DWC membership from the required stakeholder groups; and (2) These groups' participation in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy;
- Documentation of annual policy progress reports for each school under its jurisdiction; and
- Documentation of the triennial assessment* of the policy for each school under its jurisdiction;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including: (1) Methods by which the wellness policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and (2) Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy.

Annual Progress Reports

AYA will compile and publish an annual report to share basic information about the wellness policy and report on the progress of the school. With PTA, Parents, all admin and the Board of Trustees. This annual report will be published around the same time each year in November. This report will include, but is not limited to:

- The website address for the wellness policy and/or how the public can receive/access a copy of the wellness policy;
- A description of each school's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals;
- A summary of each school's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation;
- The name, position title, and contact information of the designated AYA policy leader(s) identified in Section I; and
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the DWC or SWC.

The annual report will be available in the Business Office in November.

AYA will actively notify households/families of the availability of the annual report.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, AYA will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is the AYA President, Peter Rooney, peterr@atlantayouthacademy.com.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

AYA will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

AYA is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. AYA will actively communicate ways in which others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for AYA.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

AYA is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer’s specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

AYA participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). AYA also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities including science and P.E. curriculum as well as the AYA garden. AYA is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations.
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans)
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab and go meals available to students
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers

- Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.)
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor, and promotional ideas
 - Student artwork might be displayed in the service and/or dining areas
 - Regular announcements are used to promote and market menu options
- *Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.*
 - *AYA will implement at least four of the following five Farm to School activities (meets HSP Gold level; mark/circle the four activities AYA plans to do):*
 - *Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal program;*
 - *Messages about agriculture and nutrition are reinforced throughout the learning environment;*
 - *School hosts a school garden;*
 - *School hosts field trips to local farms; and*
 - *School utilizes promotions or special events, such as tastings, that highlight the local/regional products.]*

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* and throughout every school campus* (“school campus” and “school day” are defined in the glossary). AYA will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students may be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

[Optional additional policy language may include:

- *Water cups/jugs will be available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present.*
- *All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water.]*

Competitive Foods and Beverages

AYA is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (i.e., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information are available at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

[NOTE: In some cases, states have passed more stringent nutrition standards for competitive foods and beverages in addition to the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. In these states, districts and schools must also comply with their state standards.]

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

1. The school will provide options for celebrations and parties.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff and teachers, parents, students, and the community.

AYA will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
- Promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional possible promotion techniques that AYA and individual schools may use are available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

Nutrition Education

AYA aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;

- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Link with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- Teach media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Include nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

AYA will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Reading and using USDA's food labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

[USDA's Team Nutrition](#) provides free nutrition education and promotion materials, including standards-based nutrition education curricula and lesson plans, posters, interactive games, menu graphics, and more.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

AYA is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. AYA strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on AYA property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information AYA is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of AYA to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with AYA's wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus* during the school day* will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Food advertising and marketing is defined¹⁵ as an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors.
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, or backboards (Note: immediate replacement of these items are not required; however, AYA will consider replacing or updating scoreboards or other durable equipment over time so that decisions about the replacement include compliance with the marketing policy.)
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books, or school supplies displayed, distributed.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests, or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program (CSPAP) that includes these components: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, walk and bicycle to school, and out-of-school time activities and AYA is committed to providing these opportunities.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason.

Physical Education

AYA will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. AYA will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

Recess (Elementary)

All elementary schools will offer at least **20 minutes of recess** on all or most days during the school year. If recess is offered before lunch, AYA will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built in to the recess transition as needed.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play.

In the event that AYA must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies, and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

Before and After School Activities

AYA offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity after the school day through a variety of methods. AYA will encourage students to be physically active after school by aftercare, organized sports.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

AYA will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. AYA will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

AYA will have a staff wellness subcommittee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources, and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff. The subcommittee leader’s name is Curtis Brown, Dean of the Academy.

Professional Learning

When feasible, AYA will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help AYA understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing AYA reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

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